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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#). Mideast
- [2](#). U.S.-Israel Relations
- [3](#). Muslims in European Society

Key stories in the media:

This morning, Israel Radio reported that Histadrut Labor Federation Secretary-General, Knesset Member Amir Peretz, defeated Vice Premier and interim Labor Party Chairman, Shimon Peres, in the primaries for Labor Party leadership. Peretz received 42.35 percent of the votes; Peres 39.96 percent; and Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer 17 percent. All major newspapers had reported that the race was too close to call. The radio quoted Peretz as saying that he expected his party to leave the government coalition. Israel Radio reported that Peretz and PM Sharon have agreed to meet on Sunday. The radio reported that Labor cabinet ministers will remain in place for the time being. Some commentators do not rule out a split in the party.

The major media reported that bombs rocked three hotels in Amman late last night, killing at least 57 people and wounding hundreds in apparent suicide attacks. Israel reported that Al Qaida's Iraqi branch, headed by Abu Musa al-Zargawi, claimed responsibility for the bombings. The media said that everything indicates that Al Qaida was behind the attacks. The media note that one of the hotels is known to be popular with Israeli tourists. Israel Radio reported that an Israeli Arab businessman was killed in Amman. Ha'aretz reported that a number of Israelis staying Wednesday at the Radisson SAS were evacuated before the bombing by Jordanian security forces, apparently due to a specific security alert. Israel Radio reported that Sharon expressed his condolences to King Abdullah II, and quoted Sharon as saying that the entire world must unite and fight terror. The radio, which said that Jordan sealed its land borders after the attacks, reported that the Jordanian authorities have advised Israel that they will reopen the joint border crossings in 24 hours.

The Jerusalem Post quoted EU Middle East envoy Marc Otte as saying Wednesday night that an EU advance team arrived Wednesday to look at the Rafah border terminal and determine how many EU monitors will be needed there, and what equipment and type of protection they will need to properly do their job. Israel Radio cited the Palestinian newspaper Al-Quds as saying that no progress was made last night during talks between Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and PA Civilian Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan, as the main point of contention was Israel's demand that the Palestinians provide Israel real-time video surveillance pictures from the Rafah border crossing. The radio also reported that Mofaz refused to let the PA post monitors at the Kerem Shalom cargo border crossing.

The Jerusalem Post reported that a large group of PA security officers sent a letter to PA Chairman

[President] Mahmoud Abbas, in which they wrote that the PA security forces are on the verge of collapse because of rampant corruption and growing anarchy.

Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that on Wednesday, an Argentine prosecutor identified as a Hizbullah militant the suicide bomber who detonated a van packed with explosives outside a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994, killing 85 people in Argentina's worst-ever terrorist attack.

Maariv and Yediot quoted Yuval Rabin, the son of the late PM Yitzhak Rabin, as saying that he supports Ariel Sharon and that Sharon is the "right man at the right place." The newspapers reported that Yuval Rabin made the comment in an interview that Israel TV will air this weekend. Maariv quoted Yuval Rabin as saying in the interview that he had wondered why his father had insisted on staying in the Labor Party. Ha'aretz reported that Hagai Amir, the brother of Yitzhak Rabin's killer, will appear in early January before a parole board for a hearing on whether he should be released from jail for good behavior. Hagai Amir is serving a 12-year sentence following his conviction on charges of conspiring to murder the prime minister, conspiring to attack Arabs, and manufacturing, carrying and possessing arms. Leading media reported that an academic conference on the aftermath of the Rabin assassination held Wednesday at the religious-oriented Bar-Ilan University triggered criticism from senior faculty, who termed it a "monologue rather than a dialogue."

Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel will start bringing the remaining Falash Mura descendants of Jewish families who converted to Christianity, to Israel next month, following an agreement reached on Wednesday between an Israeli delegation and the Ethiopian government. According to the agreement, some 600 Falash Mura, will be brought to Israel monthly.

The major media reported that last night, residents of the village of Issawiya, near Mt. Scopus, north of Jerusalem, rioted after a policeman shot dead a suspected car thief who was a resident of the village.

Maariv reported that a Hamas cell that had been trying to infiltrate a drone-manufacturing plant in the United Arab Emirates has recently been captured.

Leading media reported that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz's adviser on settlements, Ron Schechner, resigned on Wednesday. Attorney Talia Sasson's March 2005 report on illegal settler outposts had accused Schechner of misleading branches of the GOI.

Ha'aretz reported that the GOI has warned the Greek Orthodox Patriarch-elect, Theophilos III, not to hold an official inauguration ceremony scheduled for November 22. Ha'aretz cited a letter sent to Theophilos on Wednesday, in which Tzachi Hanegbi, the minister in charge of Jerusalem affairs at the Prime Minister's Office, wrote that Theophilos's election "has not been recognized by the State of Israel, as is required by law."

Maariv reported that the Muslim Canadian Congress has recently called on the Canadian authorities to put Sharon, a "war criminal," on trial if he enters Canada. The newspaper quoted Foreign Ministry officials as saying that this is a sensitive issue that will have to be addressed. Maariv quoted a Foreign Ministry source as saying: "Attention must be given to the political activity of the Arab lobbying groups." Yediot reported that Pakistan has informed Israel through a third party that it is interested in money, not equipment, to help earthquake relief. The newspaper cited Israel's answer to Pakistan that it finds it hard to raise a financial contribution.

Maariv reported that on Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Richard Jones asked the GOI to establish an information center that would concentrate all governmental and public tenders so that the bids are transparent and accessible to all. The Ambassador was speaking before the Israel Gateway Exhibition Seminar.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote in mass-

circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "It's getting closer. Hotels blow up in Sinai, and now hotels are blowing up in Amman."

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "It was Washington that understood, before Israel did, how useless it would be to prevent the participation of Hamas in the elections."

Yahad-Meretz Party Chairman and Geneva Accord co-initiator Yossi Beilin wrote in Ha'aretz: "Those who want to advance the peace process and know -- unlike Sharon -- that time is working against the sane in this region, must understand that there is no chance for a Pax Americana. The only formula for a solution is 'do it yourself.'"

Block Quotes:

I. "The Neighborhood is Burning, and the Borders are Breached"

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (November 10): "It's getting closer. Hotels blow up in Sinai, and now hotels are blowing up in Amman. And we're close by. The hourglass is emptying. We cannot count on luck. The Jordanians simply ran out of luck on Wednesday.... Israel's border with Egypt, through which weapons cross into the territories, has turned into a highway.... If the Israel-Egypt border is a promenade, then the Israel-Jordan border is more along the lines of a 'recommendation only' to those roaming the area. Why does anybody here think that these terror cells will stop when they see the sign 'border ahead?' Why do we wait for a disaster before starting to make a reasonable border line? And perhaps now is the time to stop the dozens or hundreds of Israeli Bedouins who operate the 'Negev-Sinai' and 'Negev-Jordan' transport routes? Today they bring tons of heroin, hashish and weapons across. Tomorrow they will also transport terrorists. Somebody has to put a stop to this neglect."

II. "A Clear Stand Vis-a-Vis Hamas"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (November 10): "On the one hand, [Prime Minister Ariel Sharon] warns that Israel will take steps to make it more difficult for Hamas to participate in the elections, and then he suffices with the remark that the participation of Hamas will determine the extent of cooperation between Israel and the PA.... It was Washington that understood, before Israel did, how useless it would be to prevent the participation of Hamas in the elections. Washington made clear its position to Israel and in this way created the current confusion. This confusion would not have existed in the first place had Prime Minister Sharon believed the peace process, and only the peace process, could provide the security he aspires to, or alternately, had he truly continued with the momentum of the unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip in the West Bank as well. For in both of these cases, Israel has an interest in the radical organizations cooperating with the PA and granting it public legitimization -- if not for making peace with Israel, at least for enforcing its authority on the public. But one who evades negotiations and any other diplomatic initiative must cling to the fabrication according to which the presence of Hamas in the PA will be the factor delaying the process -- a process that does not exist at all."

III. "Don't Count on America"

Yahad-Meretz Party Chairman and Geneva Accord co-initiator Yossi Beilin wrote in Ha'aretz (November 10): "It never was President Bush's dream to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the contrary, since it had been President Clinton's 'baby' and everything connected to Clinton is not kosher as far as Bush is concerned, it was clear from the beginning that he would stay away from the region.... The sole superpower in the world has for some time been running a policy of ducking responsibility. The American vision is based on the nonsensical notion of turning Gaza into a model of regional success like Singapore or Hong Kong, and the Secretary of State shows up to deal with the evacuation of the rubble of the settlements of Gush Katif or the dramatic issue of the technical arrangements for the Rafah crossing. Those who want to advance the peace process and know -- unlike Sharon -- that time is working against the sane in this region, must understand that there is no chance for a Pax Americana. The only formula for a solution is 'do it

yourself.'"

12. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Conservative contributor Yoram Ettinger, former minister for Congressional Affairs to Israel's Embassy in Washington and former consul general of Israel to the Southwestern U.S., wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The claim that Israel can't be defiant in its relations with the United States is totally mistaken."

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "There is a need to examine whether a consensus is at all possible among the various streams of Judaism [in the United States] on the question of where to draw [a] red line.... If this line is crossed, Israel will also have to pay for it in terms of understanding and acceptance."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Playing Poker With Washington"

Conservative contributor Yoram Ettinger, former minister for Congressional Affairs to Israel's Embassy in Washington and former consul general of Israel to the Southwestern U.S., wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (November 10): "The claim that Israel can't be defiant in its relations with the United States is totally mistaken and represents a misunderstanding of past precedents, of the special status enjoyed by the Jewish state in the U.S., of global circumstances, of the state of mind in America, and of the limitations intrinsic to a president during his second term.... Israel's unique relations with the U.S. are anchored in shared values.... The state of mind of the [American] public and Congress is different from the worldview of the State Department, which doesn't act under Congressional supervision. Congress is a fortress of systematic support for Israel and 'holds the strings of the purse.' Its power equals that of the President. The lower the President's prestige drops, the stronger the independence of Congress becomes."

II. "Where Does the Wonderful Friendship End?"

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (November 10): "The statements made a few days ago by Abe Foxman, the head of the Anti-Defamation League, deserve an outcry. He warned of increasing efforts by Christian rightists to 'Christianize America' -- a well-known and much-spoken-of phenomenon. Many are warning of it in the name of liberal values, in the name of the American constitutional heritage, in the name of political objectives.... Supporters of Israel face a complex problem: do they continue to uphold their wonderful friendship with their most devoted fans, or should they first assess the long-term significance of this support -- whether it does indeed pose a threat to the stability and security of America's Jewish community -- and work this assessment into the overall picture that determines the depth of these ties? Foxman is right about one thing: there is a need to examine whether a consensus is at all possible among the various streams of Judaism on the question of where to draw the red line -- the line that defines the moment when the community will unite against the forces that threaten its cultural and religious freedom. If this line is crossed, Israel will also have to pay for it in terms of understanding and acceptance."

13. Muslims in European Society:

Summary:

Dr. Gabi Avital, a member of the conservative group Professors For a Strong Israel, wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Muslims behave as masters, not as temporary guests."

Block Quotes:

"Enlightened Islamic Conquest"

Dr. Gabi Avital, a member of the conservative group Professors For a Strong Israel, wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (November 10): "Islam makes use of a wide array of means to take over [various Western countries]. Not every action makes conspicuous terror necessary. Wisely using European law and justice, and 'taking advantage of democracy,' are sufficient to build more mosques. Muslims behave as masters, not as temporary guests.... It's likely that those remarks are unpleasant to sterile ears and in a post-Jewish [i.e. left-wing] atmosphere, but it's impossible to dodge the basic problem of the Islamic takeover.... [George] Bernard Shaw wrote over 70 years ago: 'If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam.'"

JONES